

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF 'CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,' 'CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE,' &c.

No. 463. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1852.

PRICE 1½d.

PURIFICATION.

WE are so much creatures of habit, that to be convinced of an error is very far indeed from being ready to correct it. It may be made clear as possible, that there is some physical condition attaching to our residence, rendering it unhealthy; but if we have long endured the evil, and have no more than a *chance* of being seriously injured by it, our customary acquiescence in the routine of existence is almost sure to make us indifferent to it. It is for this reason, in great part, that the Sanitary Cause makes such slow progress. The people are not generally ignorant that a confined room with little change of air, or a collection of surface water near a dwelling, has an unfavourable tendency with regard to health; but their traditional habits enable them to submit patiently to such evils. The difficulty is to get them to change their habits.

Another thing presenting great obstructions to sanitary reform, is the structure of existing houses and streets. In many of our towns, the principal ways and lanes are as they were laid out in the middle ages, and a vast number of houses are as they were built a century ago, before any one thought of arrangements for health. There is a remarkable parity between the two kinds of difficulty. A narrow street is like a bad habit thoroughly established. A town placed long ago upon ground unsuitable for drainage, is like some settled system of life which we feel it to be impossible to reform. We see how the house might be roomier, the street wider, and effective drains conducted under ground; but there is the house built long ago, and we cannot at once dilate it like a balloon—there is the street, with its property demarcations fixed in past ages, and not to be changed without an enormous amount of trouble. A habit is in much the same predicament.

It is proposed at Manchester to attempt a sanitary reformation by means of lectures and tracts addressed to the people, and a society has been formed for the purpose. Doubtless, the late intelligence respecting a probable third visit from Asiatic cholera is what has prompted this effort, than which nothing can be more laudable in point of aim and intention. We much fear, however, from the causes above stated, that a propagation of the faith in cleanliness and pure air is a measure somewhat too mild for the occasion. It is in the way of doing good, and it will do some good; but something else is required. If the people are to be saved from the sanitary evils that beset them, it must be in a great degree in spite of themselves.

If there is any law of social life that makes itself strongly visible to us, it is that the wise have to take

the foolish in hand, and those who have knowledge those who have none, and constrain them into ways conducive to their safety and happiness. It will not do, in a dense, highly-organised society like ours, to allow indefinite freedom to each individual: that is the privilege of the savage in his thinly-peopled wilds. When man comes into towered cities, he must be accommodating, or he will not be endurable. This seems to us fully to constitute a right of the enlightened and rational to see that plans are adopted for the good of the whole, and that they are duly enforced where, from ignorance or indifference, there is any disposition to shirk them. It is, in short, the basis of the idea of a Police; a force designed, in its primitive absolute character, for the support, not of a selfish despotism, but of an authority inspired by views of general benefit, and which has no other purpose than to make individuals act or refrain from acting as is best for the entire public.

On this theory, it clearly is allowable to take strong measures for the enforcement of both education and the rules of health among the people. There is great jealousy in the English as to all Powers whatsoever, and personal freedom in domestic things is intensely appreciated. But this is a feeling that may be carried too far—as, for example, when, content with the old constables and watchmen, they resisted the introduction of a regular police force that should be partly under government control; an institution which, as is well known, has proved an evil to none but the bad. It is most desirable that prejudices on this point were overcome, since the harm apprehended is so visionary, and the resulting good so immense.

The right of a police to suppress local nuisances is, however, already established. It is not going much further to assume a right to dictate arrangements of building and draining, and for the cleanliness of house and person, in order to avert diseases that are apt to spread beyond those who are remiss in these particulars. And if A, B, and C, are entitled to be protected from the consequences of physical impurity and mal-arrangement in D, E, and F, are they not equally entitled to be saved from all the ills that may arise from a low moral and intellectual state in those personages? In other words, may they not legitimately interfere to see that D, E, and F, are tolerably educated, so as to raise them out of the savage, illiterate state, which tends so much to public detriment? We fully believe they may take this course, not merely without injury to the true liberties of the individual, but to their great ultimate advancement, there being no possibility of perfect freedom to any while a great number are left free to follow every rude and reckless

impulse. We are scarcely prepared to say, that a legislative interference to put down the use of intoxicating liquors is expedient in this country, while public opinion remains as it is; but we have no scruple whatever in avowing, that we see no theoretical objection to it, and should be glad if our country were ripe for adopting such a measure. It has been adopted, as is well known, in the state of Maine, and with a degree of success that seems to have given satisfaction. All that is wanting is, a determination of the majority to have their way in this matter. They must be prepared for a vigorous effort at first, and unswerving firmness for some time afterwards. Right soon, the overpowered minority would be thankful for having been saved from themselves.

The city of London, previous to the fire of 1666, was too much huddled, and consequently unhealthy. The inhabitants, from habit, submitted, and would probably have gone on submitting to the present day, to a monstrous rate of mortality, inferring a fearful and most unequal struggle of poor human nature with unrelenting circumstances. Providence came in to break the spell of habit; and London, rebuilt on a more healthy plan, has since had occasion to bless the destiny which laid its ancient lane-like streets in ashes. May not an earthly power interfere for similar purposes? On a point where all thinking persons are at one in opinion, why not? Conflagration is not the means which sane men would adopt: something safer, but equally decisive, may be adopted. The fact is, there is a sluggish principle in ordinary human nature which requires an external force to be exercised upon it, if we would wish to see either duty performed or evil avoided. How many have wished to learn a particular language, but failed in the energy requisite for the task, till some necessity arose to compel them—painful at first, but gratefully looked back upon when the pain was past and the acquisition made! How often do we see obligations and responsibilities of a burdensome nature prompt men into an honourable activity, who might otherwise have been unhappy idlers! A right-spirited man, who knows what duty is, but at the same time experiences some share of the usual languor in addressing himself to it, positively enjoys and delights in the external impulse which 'gives him not to choose.' We have a certain indefinable satisfaction in yielding to any necessity, apparently from its relieving us of the pain which always attends the internal debate—to do or not to do. Now, these are principles of which we should have advantage in the event of a strong policy being adopted for purification, whether moral or physical. A working-man, who hesitated whether he should allow his son to remain longer at school or send him to a factory, would placidly see the young man going on in his educational course, if he knew that the law gave him no alternative. The stupid, and not very agreeable 'cannot-be-fashed' feeling, would by most be felt as well exchanged for a compulsion which, in the very activity it brought, brought the joyful feeling of difficulties overcome and comfort secured.

And, after all, it is but a transition from one set of habits and practices to another which is required. For, of course, when once a better system was introduced and fairly set agoing, the necessity for compulsion would cease. The people would go on smoothly in their new habits, and only wonder that such practices as they had to look back upon should ever have existed.

Alas, however, we hear it called visionary to expect any such great reform to be effected in such a country as ours. We are too practical a people to listen to such wild proposals. A practical people! let us see how a practical people pleases to act in the circumstances. The approach of cholera is announced, and immediately the practical people sends a band of officers through the fetid lanes and courts where poverty dwells, to white-wash every wall ten feet up, and all the interiors of the houses. At the same time, a slight addition is made to the efforts at sweeping and keeping clean all those lanes and neglected corners. The practical people receives a report that all this is done, and is for the time content. Now, the general arrangements in those lanes are such that cleanliness is an impossibility. The houses are so confined, damp, and ill ventilated, that there can be no health in them. The people subject themselves to additional debilitation by drinking, and consequent want of proper food. If, for such a case, a little extra scavenging, and an administration of white-wash, is all that Practical People can do, then it clearly appears that Practical People is not the wise man he thinks himself, but a mere child, and scarcely even that. The real practical philosopher, according to our conception of him, when he has something to do, takes the steps required for doing it wholly and satisfactorily. The real visionary man, according, likewise, to our conception of him, is one who deludes himself into some belief that effects can be brought about without means and causes, or that, somehow, when the powder-train of Cause has been laid and ignited, the explosion of Effect will not take place. It is much to be feared, that the Practical People of the vulgar conception, is of this latter character. When true practical wisdom is understood, Purification of all kinds will be effected, but not till then.

AN AWKWARD PREDICAMENT.

By no manner of means! I was not in drink when it occurred; although, if the truth must out, I was both in love and in debt. Now, I know that among the fortunate part of mankind—those who have anything in their pockets to take care of—there is a sort of prejudice, as it were, against debtors; and as I wish to stand well with all classes, and appeal to the universal sympathies of the company, it is necessary to say a few words touching this little circumstance of debt. That I had lived beyond my income is true, and that the balance spent, therefore, was not fairly my own, I admit; but I was the next heir to rather a snug property, then possessed by a decidedly elderly and ailing individual, and in incurring debt I could not be said to be without what the law calls a reasonable probability of paying. In fact, if the worst had come to the worst, I could have sold my birthright at any time, cleared myself with the world, and had a tolerable residue over. Thus, although a heedless and imprudent young fellow, I was but little worse, since my misdeeds could not seriously or permanently injure any one but myself: I was, in truth, to use a common expression, nobody's enemy but my own.

However this may be, the difficulties of my position increased day by day, till at length I was in hourly dread of a writ. Then why not sell my reversion at once, pay off my debts, put the balance in my pouch, and fling myself abroad upon the world, to push my fortune? Because I was not only in debt, but in love. The young lady herself would have cared nothing about

the loss of the estate, and being of as sanguine a temper as myself, she would have joined without terror in any wild-goose scheme I might have devised; but, alas! Hammerton Lodge, the then property of Theodore Hunka, Esquire (a worthless miser), was the only bond of sympathy between her father and myself; and, in fact, it was with special reference to my succession that he had given his consent to our engagement. To sell my reversion, therefore, was out of the question; but what was the alternative? To be locked up for an indefinite period, without even the consolation of my divine Althea coming to whisper at my grates; for there was no such stringency in our engagement as to insure its continuing a moment after the desperate state of my circumstances became known to her father.

One morning, when brooding on these matters over my untasted coffee, the rat-tat of the postman made my heart jump; and presently two letters were handed to me. One was from Althea; but I chose to open the other first, in order to get rid of it. It was from a comrade, a horribly laconic fellow, and contained nothing more than these words: 'Ware hawk—the writ is out!' While my nerves were still jarring from the electric shock, I seized Althea's letter, and opened it with trembling hands. The news it brought was to this pleasant effect:—A rival, between whom and myself there had once been a strong hesitation in the father's mind, had recently been much at the house, and appeared to have made great progress in the old gentleman's confidence. His rise in estimation and my fall being simultaneous, there could be little doubt as to whose good offices the latter might be ascribed to; and at length Mr Harley had communicated to Althea the fact, that her favoured lover was a ruined spendthrift, who would never possess an acre in the world, and had commanded her to break off the acquaintance. The spirited girl had written this to me by the very next post, suggesting that, if I could clear my character, I should come down on a visit, as if ignorant of the new turn affairs had taken; and that if I could not clear my character, so far as mere imprudence was concerned, I should want all the more by and by—meaning the time when she should be twenty-one—somebody to take care of me.

I determined to take her advice. To sell the reversion would be madness; for, not to mention Althea's moderate dowry, a few years of economy, when the estate did become my own, would set all to rights. At any rate, to stay where I was would be worse madness—a madness which would lead—perhaps in a few hours—to my consignment to that delightful retreat, Belvedere Place,* on the door of which would stare me in the face the inscription on Dante's hell. My motions were quickened by the recollection, that my creditors had received information, only a day or two before, of Mr Hunka's recovery from his more pressing ailments. As for mere age, all creditors know that there is nothing in that, at least under a hundred, or a few years more.

When I did get down to the old House, I was very coolly received by its master; although, to do him justice, he had too much politeness to tell me to get out. The rival, whom I had known some years before, was smooth, simpering, well-looking, just such a fellow

as it would be impossible to find any reasonable excuse for knocking down; and as for my charming Althea, with her I could only hold communion with the eyes, for the two gentlemen took good care that we should have no opportunity of meeting alone. On the third morning after my arrival, finding that the motion must come from me, I requested an interview with Mr Harley, and was summoned in due form to his study. On my way thither, an arm was suddenly stretched out of one of the rooms in the corridor along which I was passing, and I felt myself drawn in by Althea. She was looking pale and terror-stricken.

'My dear love,' said I, 'do not be alarmed; I am just going in to tell your father that it's all right. My difficulties are not imaginary, I admit, but they are comparatively trifling. We shall get on famously, depend upon it.'

'Then what,' said she breathlessly, 'did that odious man mean by writing, by the next post after you came, to Parkins & Peerie, with whom I know you have disagreeable transactions?'—'I started like a guilty thing.'—'And what connection is there between that circumstance and the appearance here a few minutes ago of two hang-dog looking men, neither gentlemen nor servants, inquiring for you?' I staggered against the wall, as if I had received a blow.

'Althea,' said I, 'I have not deceived you, and yet I am lost! Parkins & Peerie are the prosecuting attorneys, and the two men are bailiffs. My debts are by no means ruinous, so far as the amount is concerned, and yet I shall lie in prison Heaven knows how long.'

'That needs not—must not be!' she cried, while a glow of resolution overspread her pale face. 'I have sent them into a room to wait for you, and I shall take care that they will wait for an hour to come. Here, get out of this window—they are on the other side of the house. You know the footpath leading through the wood to the town, and there you may remain unknown till they lose hope and return to London.' There was no alternative. We parted as lovers part who have no time for ceremonious leave-taking; and allowing myself to drop gently from the window, which was near the ground, I darted into the shrubbery.

I had nearly reached the fence which divided the grounds from a thin scrubby wood, studded here and there with large trees, and intersected by the town-ward footpath, when I was startled by the sound of voices and rushing feet behind me. To go out into the exposed part of the wood would be destruction; and, turning sharply away into the thickest of the plantation, I followed its course lengthwise, to make a detour. Still the sounds followed. My pursuers, on arriving at the fence, had doubtless seen that I was not in the wood, and they were now on my trail through the trees like blood-hounds. But my wind was good, my dislike to Belvedere Place decided, my fear of losing Althea excessive; and so I rushed madly on, betraying in all probability my course by the clatter I made among the branches. I was at length near the end of the plantation, with a thick and lofty hedge on my right hand. My mind was made up. On the other side, there was a large tree with luxuriant foliage, into which it would be easy to climb, as I should be protected from observation by the hedge. Accordingly, at the end of the plantation, I leaped the fence like a harlequin, turned the hedge, and sprang up the tree, I hardly knew how. A few twigs for my hands, and a few knots for my feet, were the only aids I had for a considerable height; but there a thick branch protruded, upon which I contrived to swing myself. The branch, however, was rotten, for the tree was old, and the leafy forks were still at some distance above my head. In

* The Queen's Bench Prison. It is considered indelicate to put any other address than Belvedere Place on letters sent by post to a prisoner.

fact, it was only the foliage I had seen from the other side of the hedge, and I had then no suspicion that the trunk was so lofty and so bare. But there was no time for consideration—the branch was going; and catching desperately at one some feet above my head, I spurned the former from me, and it broke off with a crack close to the trunk. I was safe, however; there were some knots for my feet, and having tolerably sinewy arms of my own, I was soon in a complete bower of foliage, in the very middle of the tree.

But I might as well have remained in the shelter of the hedge, for my pursuers were evidently at fault. Having reached the end of the plantation, they had turned off to thread it in another direction; and I could hear their voices growing more and more distant, till they died entirely away. Well, here I was, as snug as King Charles in the oak, and I had time to reconnoitre. The house, of which I could see the chimneys through the trees, was about two miles distant, and the highway about a gunshot from my perch. With the exception of these two objects, there was nothing around me but foliage, more or less thick, as far as the eye could see. It was the very country for a runaway. No bushranger could have desired better. The concealment of the town was quite unnecessary—supposing one could live on hazel nuts. If I had only had my simpering rival sitting face to face with me on the branch, I should have been perfectly happy! It was evident that the traitor, who appeared to know so much of my affairs, had betrayed my whereabouts to Parkins & Peerie, with the view of getting me locked up out of his way. But I should by and by convince him of his mistake. He little knew that I was at this moment perching in a tree, as free as any bird of the air, within observation, though invisible myself, of the very house where he dwelt, and with the power to swoop down upon him as soon as I might find it convenient.

While pursuing these reflections, my eye involuntarily followed the line of the trunk by which I had climbed. The branch midway had gone; there was not even a twig between it and me; and the distance to the ground was far too great for any human being to drop without being either killed or frightfully maimed. This was awkward. But there were other sides—and of precisely the same character: to descend alive without extraneous assistance was impossible! Here was a predicament, and rather an alarming one. But no—nonsense!—at so short a distance from a gentleman's house, and within sight and hearing of the high-road, it was absurd to suppose that I should be long before obtaining assistance, whenever I made up my mind to summon it. Some hours, of course, it would be necessary to pass, to give the bailiffs time to take themselves off; but this was only what I desired—there was no compulsion in it. I was a great deal better off than if I had gone to the town; for here I was close by the scene of interest, quite a neighbour—living, as it were, next door. I ran over all the points of encouragement I could think of, clapping myself on the back with great heartiness, and then, as I became accustomed to my position, I tried to examine the premises, and go about my own locality without ceremony. But this was unsuccessful. When a branch bent under me, I clutched with hands and feet at every other within reach, and backed out of the peril with fear and trembling. The fact is—for why should I conceal it?—I was neither woodsman nor cragsman, but a downright Londoner; and my getting up into that impossible situation was a mere miracle of temporary excitement.

A certain time passed by—how many years I know not; but at length I was sure that the bailiffs must have decamped, if, indeed, they were not dead and buried long ago; and even if otherwise, I felt that it would be more manly to confront them at once, than keep hiding till the end of the world on the top of a tree.

My tactics had been so far successful, but it was needless to push them to extravagance. I would now look out for some means of revisiting the surface of the earth, and give notice, accordingly, to my neighbours that I would accept of their assistance. But not one of these individuals was visible; and I recollected, not without some feeling of indignation, that I had not beheld a living soul since I had betaken myself to my perch. It is the most comfortable thing in the world to be out of temper, but the reaction is miserable; and by and by a sort of misgiving came stealing over me, cold and heavy, like a wet blanket.

But courage! there is a sound in the air; at first a low and fitful murmur, then gaining volume as it advances, like the rush of the flowing tide. It is the sound of wheels. The mail heaves in sight; it turns the shoulder of the plantation in beautiful style; it comes sweepingly on in a graceful canter. To get out, as soon as my hope became conviction, upon the extremest branch, as far as it would bear the weight of my body, was but the work of an instant; and there I sat, hat in hand, prepared to throw my whole soul into a shout at the proper time. The time came. 'Hoy!' cried I, waving my hat with unction. 'Hoy! ho-o-oy!' I could see the people on the top looking round in every direction. At length they observed me, and responded courteously to my salute with a hurra! One of them put his hand to the side of his mouth, and sent me a message, which never reached me in an articulate state; another touched his nose with his thumb, and moved the fingers at me in a friendly way; the guard blew several notes upon his horn, by way of an adieu, and then the equipage disappeared. This was disheartening; and the boughs of that old tree were so frail, emitting every now and then a crackling sound that alarmed me by its very imbecility. I backed from my dangerous position with infinite caution, and was once more shrouded among the foliage.

As I lay there, under the green canopy, much at my bodily ease, an idea arose in my mind, that the whole thing was unreal. The notion of my being fixed like a crow's nest on the top of a tree, was too absurd. There was a want of *verisemblance* about it that shocked the taste. How could I have got up?—that seemed still more impossible than getting down. It was altogether ridiculous. The probability was, that I was lying asleep under the hedge—a much more likely place of refuge than a tree-top; and I was for a moment tempted to repeat an experiment I had often made when labouring under the nightmare—to throw myself over the imaginary precipice, sure of being awakened by the shock of the descent. But I was roused from this fancy by something more grateful: it was the merry voices of children, borne to me on the soft still air, as they were passing along the road. These angels were surely sent for my relief! and bending forward as far as I durst, I gave out again my 'ho-o-oy!' The angels stopped and listened as if transfixed; but when they heard a repetition of the mysterious sound, coming from nobody, and from nowhere in particular, they echoed it with a simultaneous scream, and taking to their heels, were soon out of sight.

The thing, then, was real enough. I was actually on the top of a tree, from which there was no getting down. The evening was already beginning to close in; and I was destined to pass the night covered with green leaves, like a lost babe in the wood—so much more forlorn because alone! To pass the night!—but why not the next day, and the next night, and the next week? Why should anything happen to-morrow, or any other possible morrow, that had not happened to-day? Was there anything more probable, than that I should become the permanent *bête noir* of the neighbourhood—that my mystic voice, growing more awful as it grew more feeble, would guard the haunted precincts from intrusion; and that next winter my skeleton, nestled among

the bare branches, would demonstrate the reasonableness of the popular superstition?

The evening did close in, and then the night came down. The chimneys, the road, the trees, all vanished, and nothing was visible for a time but a paly gloom. I dozed, for I could not be said to sleep; and when I opened my eyes again, the dark vapour that had overspread the sky was partially dispelled, and numbers of stars seemed to be trooping forth from under it, and arranging themselves in mystical figures over the heavenly area. Then I slept, then I dreamed, then I awoke again. Then I did not know where I was, till the ominous bending of the branches, as I moved, recalled me to consciousness. Then I confounded the real with the unreal, and summoned the persons of my waking thoughts to hold high converse with me between heaven and earth. Althea and her father—Parkins & Peerie—the rival and Mr Theodore Hunks—the bailiff and his follower; all came out of the gloom like the trooping stars, and glided round my eyrie. Then, again, I was ravenously hungry, both asleep and awake; and no wonder, for I had eaten nothing since the morning of the preceding day. I fancied myself breakfasting at Mr Harley's, and troubling people for a quantity of rolls, a few salmon-steaks, the whole ham, and a handful of eggs. Then, again, I was back to the romantic. The forest—in the innermost wilds of America—was on fire, and the vast billows of flame came sweeping and roaring towards me from all points of the compass. My eyes at length ached so much with the intensity of the heat and light, that I awoke on a sudden, started up to a sitting posture, and for a moment fancied my dream was a reality, for the morning sun was beating full upon my face.

'Ecud! an' I did think it were a Christian on the tree!' cried a voice from below; and looking down, I saw one of the maids staring up with open eyes and mouth.

'What bee'st thou adoin'g there, zur,' she inquired, 'when the men frae Lunnon be waiting for thee?'

'Nothing, good Molly,' said I; 'I want to get down. Get somebody to bring a ladder.'

'Good laws!—but how did thee get up, zur? Well an' zure, there be Thomas and Harry acoming, and they'll fetch the ladder from the plantation. I must tell nobody else, zur, for they be deadly wishful to get the reward, and I'm to be married to one on 'em.' While she ran off screaming for the men, some bitter thoughts passed through my mind. How many shillings and half-crowns had I given these ungrateful knaves!—and now, their dearest ambition is to be the first to betray me into the hands of the Philistines! I descended the ladder with a stern, slow, and rheumatical gravity, and fixed upon the caitiffs when I reached the ground so severe a look, that they shrunk back conscience-stricken.

On we walked towards the house, my mind now made up as to how to play my part; and I flatter myself it was with some dignity I entered the breakfast-room, and bowed to Mr Harley and the rest of the company, including the bailiff and his follower. 'I regret, sir,' said I, going up to the bailiff, with grim condescension, 'that I have given you the trouble of waiting.'

'No trouble in life,' said he; 'but I did think you might have been in a greater hurry to hear that Mr Theodore Hunks has departed this life, and that I, Timothy Peerie, for myself and Mr Parkins, shall feel much honoured by your professional patronage.'

My eyes dazzled. There was a stifled cry at the door behind me. Althea, half-smothered by mingled sobs and laughter, was being pushed forward by Molly, and in an instant I had her in my arms, and wholly smothered her with kisses. On raising my head, I saw the rival passing the window on horseback, slowly enough to see what was going on within. I gave him a friendly

nod of good-by. What havoc I did make that morning among the rolls, and salmon-steaks, and eggs, and ham! After breakfast, my postponed interview with Mr Harley took place, which ended, as you all guess, by making Althea my own.

KNIVES AND FORKS.

It has been left for modern refinement to introduce the minute classification of *knives* which is now so familiar to us. There are the dinner-knife, the dessert-knife, and the carver; the butcher's knife and the currier's knife; the cheese-knife and the oyster-knife; the pallet-knife and the putty-knife; the fruit-knife, the pruning-knife, and the 'bread-and-cheese' knife; the penknife, the desk-knife, and the double-bladed knife which so often finds a depository in the school-boy's pocket; and there are many mysterious-looking knives in the cutlers' windows, the use of which baffles all ordinary conjecture, but which shew that the world is making rapid strides in the knife region. We have gone beyond the age when the eating-knives, as distinguished from the working-knives, were all of one kind, and not divisible into the dinner-knife, the dessert-knife, the fruit-knife, and other sub-varieties. We have advanced still further beyond the age when the working-knife was a principle and the eating-knife an accident; when the artisan, having a dinner to eat, was glad to cut it with any knife with which he was wont to cut his leather, or his wood, or the other material of his handicraft. We are still further removed from the times when the dagger and the hatchet, employed in drilling holes into, or cutting off pieces from, the enemy in the battle-field, were rendered available for the same kind of drilling and cutting in respect to a piece of cooked meat or a lump of bread. Nay, even this does not measure our full distance from the good old times; for archaeologists tell us of an age when cutting-implements were made of stone, long before the Bronze Age or the Iron Age had arrived.

Our remarkable friends the Chinese, who have their peculiar way of doing so many things, contrive to make their *chopsticks* do duty for forks and spoons. Sir J. F. Davis quotes the account given by Captain Laplace, an officer in the French navy, of a Chinese entertainment, at which he was an honoured guest. The captain does full justice to the hospitality of his host; but says—'I nevertheless found myself considerably at a loss how to use the two little ivory sticks, tipped with silver, which, together with a knife that had a long, narrow, and thin blade, formed the whole of my eating apparatus. I had great difficulty in seizing my prey in the midst of those several bowls filled with gravy; in vain I tried to hold, in imitation of my host, this substitute for a fork between the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand; for the cursed chopsticks slipped aside every moment, leaving behind them the unhappy little morsel which I coveted.' He got over this difficulty, by the polite aid of his entertainer; but when the bowls of rice appeared, his troubles recommenced, for he could not imagine how a man could eat rice with two little sticks. 'I therefore waited until my host should begin, to follow his example; foreseeing that, on this new occasion, some fresh discovery would serve to relieve us from the truly ludicrous embarrassment which we all displayed. In a word, our two Chinese, cleverly joining the ends of their chopsticks, plunged them into the bowls of rice, held up to the mouth (which was opened to its full extent); and thus they easily shovelled in the rice, not by grains, but by handfuls.' These Chinese were certainly beaten by an old gentleman whom we once knew, and who was accustomed to eat green peas with a table-spoon, characterising it as 'a slow way, but a sure one.'

But it is of knives, rather than forks, that we have

just now to speak. Mr Worsaae, the learned Danish archaeologist, has sought to give something like a systematic meaning to the fact, that stone-cutting implements are occasionally met with in old ruins. He says, in his *Primæval Antiquities of Denmark*: 'It is well known, that stones shaped by art into the form of wedges, hammers, chisels, knives, &c., are frequently exhumed from the earth. These, in the opinion of many, could certainly never have served as tools or implements, since it was impossible either to cut or carve with a stone; hence it was concluded, that they had formerly been employed by our forefathers in those sacrifices which were offered to idols during the prevalence of heathenism.' But he brings forward sufficient evidence to shew, that the stone implements effected much more than this—that they were used for working and for eating, as well as for sacrificing.

Beckmann, who ferreted out such curious odds-and-ends as materials for his *History of Inventions*, tells us, that among the Romans all articles of food were cut into small morsels before being served up at table; and this was the more necessary, as the company did not sit at table, but lay on couches turned towards it, consequently could not well use both their hands for eating. For cutting meat, persons of rank kept in their houses a carver, who had learned to perform his duty according to certain rules; he was designated the *scissor, carpus, or carptor*. This carver used a knife—the only one placed on the table, and which, in the houses of the opulent, had an ivory handle, and was generally ornamented with silver. The bread was not cut at table. It more nearly resembled flat cakes than large loaves like our own, and could easily be broken; hence mention is so often made of the 'breaking of bread.'

And even in the case of such knives as were possessed by the Greeks and Romans, there is some doubt whether they were made of steel or even of iron. In the earliest metallic age, so to speak, brass, or some other metal nearly resembling it—perhaps copper alloyed with tin—furnished a very general material for weapons, and for cutting implements used in the arts. It is now considered almost certain, that the vast sculptured monuments of ancient Egypt were wrought with cutting tools of brass, hardened by some process not at present known. The Greeks, at the time of the Trojan war, are believed to have been nearly ignorant of steel and iron, and to have used cutting implements of brass or bronze. Among the treasures of the temple of Jerusalem, which Cyrus restored to the Jews on their liberation from captivity, were nine-and-twenty knives; and these likewise, so far as we can now judge, were made of brass or bronze.

Dr Johnson asserts, that the Scotch Highlanders knew nothing about dinner-knives till after the Revolution. Butler—having in mind, probably, the sword of the renowned Pendragon, which would

Serve for battle or for dinner as you please;
When it had slain a Cheshire man, would toast a Cheshire
cheese—

describes the dagger of one of the Hudibras heroes as

A serviceable dudgeon,
Either for fighting or for drudging;
When it had stabbed or broke a head,
It would scrape trenchers or chip bread,
Toast cheese or bacon; though it were
To bait a mouse-trap, 'twould not care.

Without attempting to trace, step by step, the introduction of knives into domestic economy, we may profitably glance at a few salient features in their manufacture.

The cutlery manufacture at Sheffield is in every respect a remarkable one. The town, the streams which flow through it, the valleys which converge

towards it, the buildings which constitute it, the busy population who work in it, the trade classifications which characterise it, the raw materials consumed in it—all are worthy of our notice. Five streams flow through or into Sheffield: the Sheaf, the Don, the Loxeley, the Porter, and the Kevilin; but the last three join the Don by the time it has left the town. No streams in England, perhaps, are more busily worked than these, so many are the wheels and mills turned by the descending waters. For five centuries, at least, has cutlery been made here; the 'Sheffield thwytel' or whittle, or knife of the *Canterbury Tales*, sufficiently attests this. Down to the time of Elizabeth, however, it would appear that the knives made at Sheffield were 'for the common use of the common people,' and could be sold at a penny apiece; good cutlery was made at London, Salisbury, Woodstock, Godalming, and other towns, and was also imported from France and Germany. Stowe writes that 'Richard Matthews, on Fleete Bridge, was the first Englishman who attained the perfection of making fine knives and knife-hafts; and in the fifth year of Queen Elizabeth, he obtained a prohibition against all strangers and others for bringing any knives into England from beyond the seas.'

At that period—say from two and a half to three centuries ago—there were no large establishments in Sheffield; the trade was carried on by small masters, whose wheels were turned by the Loxeley and the Kevilin. When the trade became more extensive, the cutlers of Sheffield were incorporated by act of parliament in 1640, and a 'master-cutler' appointed; and by degrees the small masters—who had sold chiefly to the agents of London houses—became manufacturers and merchants on a large scale.

Sheffield produces the steel for the cutlery, as well as the cutlery itself. Some of the establishments are converting-works, where iron is converted into crude steel; some are tilts, where the steel is tilted or hammered to a further degree of completeness; some are foundries, where steel of a particular quality is produced by casting; and some are mills, where steel is wrought into bars or sheets. These still remain, to a considerable extent, separate employments, though some of the larger firms now include two or more of them in the same works. But in the actual making of the cutlery there is far more division and subdivision of skill: there are cutlery-casters, tableknife-makers, fork-makers, penknife-makers, lancet-makers, razor-makers, scissor-makers, shear-makers, besides many others; together with ivory-cutters, horn-pressers, bone-pressers, haft-makers, haft-ornamenters, &c., employed in making handles. These relate to the masters or employers of labour; the subdivision is yet more complete when we regard the handicraft of the actual workman, for here the range of each man's employment is usually very limited indeed; he works at only one kind of process upon one kind of article, but he gets through an enormous amount of this work.

As an example of the system here noticed, it may be mentioned that a tableknife-maker cannot make a pocket-knife, or if he can, he does not; he uses different tools, and his fingers are accustomed to different kinds of manipulative processes. And the pocketknife-makers, instead of being one individual, are a congeries of many individuals. One man forges the blade to its proper shape; another grinds it on the wheel; a third polishes it with emery and leather, and some sort of 'magic' polishing-paste; another makes the inner-scale, or foundation for the handle; a fifth makes the little steel spring; a sixth shapes the bits of ivory, or pearl, or horn, or other material which is to form the outer handle; while a seventh—the real maker of the penknife—with his vice, anvil, hammers, files, burnishers, drill-bow, drills, emery-wheels, and other tools, builds up all the little fragments into a penknife; and so many

are there, and so various the little adjusting processes, that an ordinary penknife passes through the hands of the maker seventy or eighty times during the putting together.

A Sheffield forge is before us, and two men are fashioning a table-knife; we will watch them. The smithy is somewhat dusky, and dirty, and hot. There is a forge-fire, fed with small coal, and kindled by bellows worked by hand; and by the side of this is a large block of stone or wood, serving as a substantial work-bench. On or near this block are small steel anvils, hammers, stithies, bosses of various curvatures, and other tools. A rod of steel—varying in quality according to the intended price of the knife to be made—is cut to the required length, and the piece heated in the forge-fire; it is placed upon an anvil, and beaten and bevelled, and turned and beaten again, until it assumes roughly the form of the blade of a knife. But the *tang*, or reduced prolongation of the blade, has yet to be fabricated; the blade is welded to the end of a thin rod of iron; a portion of this is cut off; and this portion, after being brought to a white heat, is fashioned into a tang and a shoulder between the tang and the blade. Our knife, whether of mere iron or common steel, of shear-steel or cast-steel, is now shaped; and then by a little more heating, and a sudden cooling in cold water, and another but gradual heating, it is brought to the temper or degree of elasticity proper for a table-knife.

The dirty, discoloured rough blade now needs to be ground; and this introduces us to one of the peculiarities of Sheffield industry. The blade-forgers and the blade-grinders are two; neither can do the work of the other. A wheel, in Sheffield language, is something more than a wheel elsewhere; it is not only a true and proper wheel, but it is the whole building in which cutlery-grinding is carried on. Before steam-power was employed at Sheffield, the grinding-wheels or stones were mostly worked by the water-power of the small rivers, and large numbers of them are so still. These country wheels have something rudely picturesque about them; they are often situated in beautiful valleys, and have not unfrequently dams as high as the roof of the hut which shelters the grinders. The low buildings—houses we must not call them—do not belong to the grinders: they are the property of speculators, who let off the troughs and stones to the grinders at a stipulated rent—the renters taking their chance of wet and dry seasons, for the streams are sometimes so dried up as to leave no water-power. There are now, however, several large establishments within the town, belonging to capitalists or to companies, and parted off into a number of rooms or workshops; a large steam-engine supplies working-power to every room, and the rooms are supplied with grindstones so small as four inches in diameter, or so large as seven feet, varying, too, in quality according to the kind of cutlery to be ground. The grinders rent these rooms, and the use of the steam-power, and the stones; they come at their own time, and grind any cutlery which the manufacturers may have intrusted to them; and thus we may see table-knives, pocket-knives, penknives, razors, forks, and saws, all being ground at once in different rooms.

A dirty and noisy process is this of grinding; indeed, what with the thumping of the huge hammers in the tilts, and the teeth-grating sound of the grinding in the wheels, Sheffield is not altogether the place for a person with delicate ear. The grinding not merely gives a moderate edge to the knife-blade, but clears all scales and oxidation from the surface, and renders it true and regular. Then comes the glazing or polishing, the finishing touch by which—aided by emery, leather, and other polishing substances—the resplendent blade is made ready for the handle-maker.

A fork must obviously exhibit manufacturing pecu-

liarities different from those of a knife; so, likewise, has it its domestic or dinner-table peculiarities. It was later born than the dinner-knife. The pre-revolution Highlanders, of whom Dr Johnson spoke, were, he tells us, 'accustomed to cut the meat into small mouthfuls for the women, who put them into their mouths with their fingers.' It would seem, from a passage in one of Ben Jonson's plays, that forks were only about coming into general use in England in his time. In his play of *The Devil's an Ass*, produced in 1616, there occurs the following conversation:—

Meercraft. Have I deserved this from you two? for all my pains at court to get you each a patent?

Gilthead. For what?

Meercraft. Upon my project of the forks.

Sledge. Forks! what be they?

Meercraft. The laudable use of forks, brought into custom here as they are in Italy, to the sparing of napkins.

The knife-forgers live in Sheffield; but the fork-forgers, for reasons of which we are ignorant, live mostly out of the town: they are to be met with in the suburban villages, forming a kind of distinct body among themselves. Forks are made from commoner steel than knives. The rod of steel, heated to the proper temperature, is forged to form the shank and the tang; and powerful stamps, punches, and dies mark off and cut out the pieces of metal, leaving those which constitute the prong. Then comes that most lamentable employment, the dry-grinding of the forks: the grinder hovers over a stone of sharp grit, not wetted as for grinding other cutlery, and draws into his lungs the dry particles of steel and stone resulting from his labour. In a former volume of the *Journal** was given a notice of the frightful mortality among the grinders of Sheffield, of certain ingenious contrivances for lessening the hazard of the labour, and of the recklessness among the men, which rendered these contrivances almost nugatory. It would be pleasant to think that any change for the better had occurred in this respect; but we fear that, if observable at all, it is sadly small in amount.

The metallic portions of knives and forks, though the most important, are not the only ones which call forth Sheffield ingenuity: the trade of handle-making is not only large in the aggregate, but exhibits many subdivisions. In the first place, although the users of a knife may give the name of handle to the holding part of all kinds, yet a Sheffield man knows at a glance the handle which has two flat pieces rivetted upon a central plate, from the haft which has a tang thrust into a hole. In the next place, these handles and hafts are made of such diverse materials, that the services of many kinds of artisans are required in their preparation. Ivory, mother-of-pearl, bone, horn, ebony, lignum-vitæ, tortoise-shell, metal—all are used for this purpose, and much skill is displayed in cutting, polishing, stamping, staining, bleaching, studding, and variously ornamenting the handles and hafts so made.

If we could trace the travels of a set of knives and forks in and through and around Sheffield, we should see how little there is to represent the factory system of Lancashire. In the vast buildings of that busy county, a bale of cotton goes in at one door, and comes out at another in the form of woven calico; but there are no Sheffield buildings in which a bar of iron becomes transformed into knives and forks. The converting and tilting, and shearing and casting of the steel, the forging, and grinding, and polishing of the blade, the fashioning and finishing of the haft or handle, and the putting together of the component elements—all require the aid of different persons, exercising different kinds of skill in different workshops. A Sheffield knife

has to run about the town picking up the bones and muscles which are to form its organism; and this is the case whether the knife be cheap or costly. There are knives and forks made at Sheffield for the South American market at as low a price as twopence per pair, and there are knives and forks of silver and gold resplendency; yet all are produced in what may be called the piecemeal way, rather than on the factory system.

Cheap as our productions are in this branch of manufacture, there is, at anyrate, one kind of cutlery in which the French have beaten us. Did any one ever see an English clasp-knife which could be sold retail for one half-penny? We confess to have never met with such; yet they are to be found in France. They are very rude pocket-knives, formed of a rough blade of common iron, folding into an equally rough turned cylindrical handle of wood, painted in party-colour like children's half-penny toys. Their utility is of course very limited, from the softness of the metal; but as they will cut bread, and apples, and other provisions, and can be purchased for five centimes each, they are said to be used in immense numbers by the country people of France. Wide, indeed, is the interval between these humble productions and the magnificent show-knife in Messrs Rodgers's ware-room at Sheffield, with its 1800 blades; or the Lilliputian knives and scissors, of which it takes a good round number to weigh one grain.

THE LAST OF THE TROUBADOURS.

IS reading of the recent excursions which our aspiring neighbour, the president of the French republic, has been making throughout France, our eye is caught by the word 'Agen,' the name of one of the towns at which he halted. In that place, situated on the Garonne, about a day's voyage south of Bordeaux, there lives a man commonly called the Last of the Troubadours—a peasant-poet, writing for Languedoc and Provence—a man who sings and speaks and writes in the provincial language or *patois* of the surrounding district, but in such a way as has made him enthusiastically welcomed all over the south of France. The name of this man is Jacques Jasmin. He is a hairdresser, keeping a little shop in Agen. He is about fifty-one years of age, strong, vivacious, frank, full of passionate energy, entertaining the utmost confidence in his own powers, but using them with the greatest good sense relatively both to their management and to the objects and manner of their employment. While we know that he is really popular to an extent of which we in our cold England can hardly form a conception; that his songs and poems are in the mouths of the countrymen who labour in the fields or sit by their firesides; that when he recites before assemblies of perhaps 2000 people, the ladies tear the flowers and feathers out of their bonnets to weave them into garlands for him; we know, likewise—and this is the most remarkable thing of all—that he has a rule of diligent labour, of revision and correction, which he follows as conscientiously as if his taste and principle had been fashioned in a classical school. Two volumes of his poems have been translated into modern French, and are printed side by side with the originals; and to these a third has recently been added, which contains several things particularly worthy of note.

Through the kindness of a friend, some of his more recent pieces have reached us, and it is clear that he continues to improve. He is every way, in so far as we can understand him, a very singular specimen of the poet of the people. An inability to enter into other nationalities than our own, may prevent our rating him quite so high as his countrymen say he deserves; but we certainly do see that his plan of operation is a rare, a striking, and a most effective one.

He stands in the exceedingly odd position of a troubadour and a classic combined. Though professing to disdain extempore effusions, he is both quick and clever at them; but for nothing in the world will he forego the delight of doing all the justice to his favourite subjects that the most elaborate and careful treatment can enable him to render. His are no 'touch-and-go' compositions. He tells the story of the people in fictions so exquisitely true, so replete with beauty, yet so familiar and peasant-like, that we can recall nothing similar to these compositions in the whole round of popular poetry. Crabbe may be as genuine and hearty—and there are among his poems some of which Jasmin often reminds us—but Crabbe was the priest of the parish, and painted from an eminence; while Jasmin stands in the crowd below, and sketches the groups among which he mingles.

Jasmin knows nothing of ancient rules, yet he is as severe as any master of antiquity in self-judgment. Still more strange is it, that this Poet of the Peasants has never disclaimed his original profession, but continues as usual to lather and shave the chins of his countrymen, and to dress the ladies' hair. More strange yet, he refuses all pay for his recitations. The single announcement of his name is enough to draw immense audiences, and his appearance excites an enthusiasm, compared with that of a London crowd for Jenny Lind, is described as cold and faint. When he is on one of his missions, undertaken for religious or charitable purposes, he does not refuse to scatter impromptus in return for hospitality and compliments; but not for the best of objects will he permanently degrade his art. He will give out to the public at large only what he has carefully designed and matured. A sketch of one of his poems, entitled *Crazy Martha*, may give some idea of the subjects in which he most delights, and his manner of treating them.

Martha was a poor girl, well known in the town of Agen as living thirty years on public charity: one whom, as Jasmin says, we little rogues teased whenever she went out to get her small empty basket filled. For thirty years, we saw that poor idiot woman holding out her hand for our alms. When she went by, we used to say: 'Martha must be hungry, she is going out!' We knew nothing about her, yet everybody loved her. But the children, who have no mercy, and laugh at everything said, used to call out: 'Martha! a soldier!' and then Martha, who dreaded soldiers, used to run away. So much for fact; but now comes the question: 'Why did she run away?' Jasmin, he says, sat himself down to answer this question, at some thoughtful moment when the image of the poor maiden, graceful even in rags, presented itself to him; and after having diligently sought out her previous history through a number of channels, the result was the following relation.

It was a beautiful day, and the clear pure waters of the river Lot were murmuring on their banks, when a young girl walked by its side with a disturbed and anxious look. In the next town, the young men of the village were engaged in balloting for the conscription. The young girl had a lover there; her fate was entwined with his; and her whole aspect shewed how deep and heartfelt was her anxiety. In her heart she prayed, but she could not keep still. This maiden was Martha. Another girl, too, was there; she also had trouble in her eye, but not profound like Martha's. This was Annette, a neighbour's daughter. The two girls talked together of their doubts and fears, but each in her own way. At length, Annette took alarm at her friend's intensity of anxiety. She endeavoured to soothe her: 'Take courage; it is noon, we shall soon know; but you are trembling like a reed. Your look frightens me. If James should be chosen, would it kill you?' 'I don't know, indeed,'

replied Martha. Forthwith, Annette begins to remonstrate: 'Surely you would not be so foolish as to die of love—men never do—why should women? If my young man, Joseph, were to be drawn, I should be very sorry; but I should never think of such a thing as dying for him.'

So the loving and the light young maidens go on discoursing. The drum is heard at a distance; it draws nearer; it announces the return of those who have been fortunate enough to escape. Now, which of those two girls will have the happiness of beholding her beloved? Not Martha, alas! The thoughtless, gay, joyous Annette is to be the favoured one, for Joseph is there among the youths who have drawn the fortunate number. As for James, he is drawn, and he must go. A fortnight afterwards, Annette, who would have been so easily comforted, is married; and James takes his sorrowing farewell of poor Martha. If war spares him, he promises to return with a whole heart to her. So ends the first part or canto of the piece.

The second begins: The month of May returns again; and it is painted as only the southern poets can paint it—how often in the troubadour songs do such pictures as these return?—

May, sweet May, again is come,
May, that fills the land with bloom;
On the laughing hedgerows' side
She hath spread her treasures wide.
She is in the greenwood shade,
Where the nightingale hath made
Every branch and every tree
Ring with her sweet melody.

Sing ye, join the chorus gay,
Hail this merry, merry May!
Up, then, children! let us go
Where the blooming roses grow;
In a joyful company
We the bursting flowers will see, &c.

But in the midst of all this happiness, poor Martha sings her sad song alone:—'The swallows are come back; my own two birds are come to their own old nest. No one has separated them as we have been parted. How bright and pretty they are! and round their necks they wear the little bit of ribbon which James tied upon them when they pecked the golden grains out of our clasped hands.'

Poor Martha! she sings and complains, sick at heart and ill in body; for a slow fever has come upon her, and she seems to be dying. Just at that juncture, a kind old friend, guessing the cause of her decline, does a beneficent act with a view to her restoration. He sells a vine, gives her the money, and with this commencement of a fund, Martha labours incessantly, hoping to get the means of buying her lover's freedom. Her kind friend dies: this is discouraging; but still she proceeds. She sells the dwelling he had bequeathed to her, and runs with the money to the priest of the village.

'Monsieur le Curé,' she says, 'I have brought you the whole sum. Now you can write: buy his liberty, I beseech you; only do not tell him *who* has obtained it. Oh, I know full well that he will guess who it is; but still do not name me, nor feel any fear about me, for I can work on till he comes. Quickly, good, dear sir—quickly bring him back.' Thus the second part closes.

The third begins:—Now comes the difficulty of a search for the missing lover; for in the time of the Emperor's great wars, it was no easy matter to follow out the career of a conscript. The kind priest was skilful enough in his own field: he could hunt out a sinner in his sin, and bring him back to the fold, but to find a nameless soldier in the midst of an army—one who had not been heard of for three years—was another thing. However, no pains were spared. Time went on, and still Martha worked to replace part of what she had expended, and to have something more to bestow. The news of her persevering love was

spread abroad, and everybody loved and sympathised with her. Garlands were hung on her door, and little presents against her bridal were prepared by the maidens. Above all, Annette was kind and eager. Thus every one considered her as betrothed, and the marriage only waiting for the bridegroom. At length, one Sunday morning after mass, the good priest produced a letter: it was from James. It told that he had received the gift of freedom; that he was coming the next Sunday. Not a word was said of his real deliverer. Having been left in the village a foundling, his notion was, that his mother had at length made herself known, and done this kind action. He exulted in the thought.

The week passes away, and after mass the whole population of the village awaits his coming, the good priest at their head, and Martha, poor Martha, by his side. The view which our poet gives of the scene—of the village road—of the expecting parties, is in the highest degree beautiful and artistic. All on a sudden, at the distant turn in the road, two figures are seen approaching—two soldiers: the tall one, there can be no doubt about; it is James, and how well he looks! He is grown, he is more manly, more formed by far than when he went away; but the other, who can it be? It is more like a woman than a man, though in soldier's clothes; and a foreigner too—how beautiful and graceful *she* is; yes, it is a *cantinière*. A woman with James! Who can it be? Martha's eyes rest on her—sadly, and with a deathlike fixedness; and even the priest and the people are dumb. Just at that moment, James sees his old love. Trembling and confused, he stops. The priest can no longer be silent. 'James, who is that woman?' and trembling like a culprit, he answers: 'My wife, monsieur—I am married.' A wild cry issues from the crowd—it is Martha's; but she neither weeps nor sighs: it is a burst of frantic laughter—thenceforth her reason is gone for ever.

This is the touching story which Jasmin has elaborated from the idea of poor crazy Martha. We have sketched it as a fair specimen of his manner of dealing with a suggestive fact; but in truth one grand charm can in no way be made known to the English reader. Reading his poems through the medium of a French translation, printed side by side with the original, we cannot but see how condensed and expressive is the Provençal. It has been well defined as 'an ancient language, which has met with ill fortune.' During the twelfth century—from 1150 to 1220—it had reached a high degree of perfection, having been the first of those to which the Latin gave birth after the inroads of barbarism. You find in it a mixture of Spanish, Italian, and Latin. This first-formed modern tongue was violently arrested in its progress at the commencement of the thirteenth century in the wars of the Albigenses. There was no political centre, however, in the land of its birth, and it fell into disuse, and became merely a patois. Jasmin has imposed on himself the singular task of using this language, not exactly as now spoken in any one place, but as it was written in its purer times; and wherever he goes, he is understood, even by the Catalonians. Sometimes he brings up an ancient word, and sometimes coins one of immediate affinity to the old, but always with discretion and good sense. An amusing anecdote of him has been recorded lately. During one of his poetical wanderings in the south, it seems he was challenged by an enthusiastic patois rhymist to a round of three subjects in twenty-four hours; both poets to be under lock and key for that space. This is the answer of our troubadour:—

'Sir—I received only yesterday, on the eve of my departure, your poetic challenge; but I must say, that had it come to me at ever so opportune a moment, I should not have accepted it. What, sir! you propose to

my Muse, who delights in air and liberty, the confinement of a close room, guarded by sentinels, where she is to treat of three given subjects in twenty-four hours! Three subjects in the space of twenty-four hours! You terrify me! Allow me to inform you, in all humility, that the muse you are for placing in so dangerous a predicament, is too old to yield more than two or three verses a day. My five principal poems [they are here named] cost me twelve years' labour, and they do not amount in all to 2400 couplets. The chances, you see, are not equal. Your Muse will have performed her triple task before mine, poor thing, has found herself ready to begin.

'I dare not, then, enter the lists with you; the steed which drags my car painfully along, and yet comes at last to its journey's end, is no match for a railway carriage. The art which produces verses, one by one, cannot enter into combination with mechanism. My Muse, therefore, declares herself conquered beforehand, and I fully authorise you to register the fact.

'I have the honour to be, sir, yours,

'JACQUES JASMIN.

'P.S.—Now that you know the *Muse*, please to know the *Mus*. I love glory; but never did the success of others disturb my repose.'

It should be added, that Jasmin is always to be found among those who contend against the extreme centralisation of France. His whole character and turn of thought is provincial. 'The country was my cradle; in the country shall be my grave.' His influence is always moral, calming, and healthful. The poet is no revolutionist; he seeks only for the triumphs of self-conquest and virtue. It may be said, that he is too full of the cultivation of his art to be a politician; but he appears to us to be truly patriotic, and to put aside the temporary polemics of the day with a dignity which is very far from indifference.

NEW ORLEANS.

THE great city of the southern states of America, New Orleans, is one of the most interesting in the world, and presents human life in a very peculiar aspect. It is a singular place, with a singularly various population. Almost every nation of the earth has its representative there; and the Levee on a clear day presents a scene of activity and bustle hardly to be witnessed elsewhere. The city is situated on the eastern bank of the Mississippi, nearly ninety miles from its mouth, and extends about five miles by the course of the stream, from Carrollton at the northern, to the Powder Wharf at the southern end. It is built on what was once a swamp, and what is but little else now; and is protected from the overflow of the waters of the river by an embankment called the Levee. This mound, for so it may properly be termed, extends fully 300 miles along the Mississippi above and below New Orleans, and serves to prevent the river from inundating the plantations on its banks. At the city, it is so constructed as to yield wharfage for vessels of every description, from the 'broad horns' of the Father of Waters to the splendid steam-boats of the great western rivers, and the noble ships which traverse the ocean. The city does not extend a greater distance back from the Mississippi, at any one point, than half a mile; and he who ventures further in that direction, will soon find himself confronted by a swamp, and surrounded by alligators or some other equally formidable dwellers in the marshy lands of warm southern climates. The streets are mostly straight, crossing each other at right angles. The houses in the old or French part of the city are stuccoed, and generally not more than two storeys high; while those in the American portion, or what is called the second municipality, are of red brick, and three or four storeys in altitude. The thoroughfares nearest the river, and running parallel to it, are devoted almost exclusively to

business, and present the greatest activity and confusion. Those persons engaged in mercantile pursuits are to be seen hurrying along with rapid step; while drays, driven by slaves, and laden with cotton, sugar, and other products of the south, make a continual roar from sunrise.

The winter season is the most exciting in New Orleans, for it is then that business is at its height. That portion of the Levee set apart for steam-boats is the most crowded part of the river-front; and it often occurs that forty or fifty steam-boats, varying from 1000 to 2000 tons each, are lying there at one time, discharging or receiving cargo. Throughout almost the whole day, the place is one mass of human beings, merchandise, and drays. There are thousands of bales of cotton, mountains of pork, countless barrels of flour, hundreds of hogsheds of sugar, and immense quantities of other goods, the produce of the great Valley of the Mississippi. The puff of steam from the high-pressure engines of the huge steam-boats, mingled with the songs of the slaves, and the confusion incident to the business transacted in the place, make the beholder think the Levee a pandemonium; while from the extraordinary activity of the throng of human beings before him, he concludes that nearly every individual among them is in pursuit of that which is as dear to the pursuer as life itself. New Orleans is, and has been, the great mine from which the young men of America extract fortunes, and there thousands of them spend their early manhood in the search after wealth. Keen, eager sons of trade they are, and they turn neither to the right nor to the left in their determination to obtain gold. They come from the north, the east, the great west, and the south, to set their lives upon the cast; and either gain a fortune, or leave their bodies to moulder amid the swamps, or fertilise the soil of Louisiana. Junius, in one of his private letters to Woodfall, says: 'Let your whole aim be at a competency; for without it no man was ever happy, or, I doubt, even honest.' It appears as if every young man in New Orleans had that sentence engraven upon his heart, and acted according to it. Some run into dissipation, and die prematurely, far away from home and friends; all that is heard of them is, that they were carried off by the yellow fever at New Orleans, and expired among strangers, unvisited and unmourned. Others succeed in accumulating wealth, return to their homes old men at the age of forty years, and drag out an existence, imbibed by a broken constitution and enfeebled health.

The unloading of the river craft furnishes employment for thousands of clerks, who are to be seen on the Levee, during the hours of business, actively engaged in superintending the discharge of cargoes. The climate is warm, even in winter; and the usual dress worn by the male population is cloth trousers, light coat and waistcoat, and broad-brimmed straw-hat. This is the most common costume worn by the clerks; and they contrast strongly in their light dress and white complexions with the swarthy slaves, in coarse jeans, at their side. The sun is so powerful at certain times, as to make it essential for the loungers to protect himself from its rays by an umbrella; but it is only the man of leisure who enjoys the luxury. The merchant has no time for holding umbrellas; he must move quickly, and transact his business, or fail of success. When the day declines, the large steam-boats generally take their departure for the 'up-river country,' and then there is a scene of excitement difficult to describe. The public are familiar with the great steam-boats of the Mississippi through Banvard's Panorama; but there they are *pictured*, and not real. The artist cannot paint one of the huge craft in the act of leaving the Levee at New Orleans, amidst the confusion and excitement peculiar to the place and time. He may picture the boat; and that is all. He cannot paint

the noise of the escaping steam; the swift stream of the great river carrying the huge mass downwards, in spite of the force of its powerful engines; or the joyous song of the black slaves, or deck-hands, who pour out a favourite strain as the boat leaves her moorings, and dashes her head against the current of the turbulent Mississippi. No; these things are past his art; they can only be appreciated by being seen, and once seen, will never be forgotten. I have often stood on shore, watching the huge craft as they moved from their moorings, and struggled against the stream—listening to the hoarse growl of the escaping steam, and the wild song of the black slaves; and, as the bright rays of the sinking sun dyed the heavens in purple and gold, and threw a blush over the broad river, I have felt as if witnessing the realisation of a dream. As night settles down, the excitement dies away; and by nine o'clock, the Levee is silent. The figure of some officer, or boat-hand, is the only human form to be seen where of late so many thousands were moving; the bustle and confusion of the day is changed for the sound of the slowly-escaping steam of a newly-arrived boat, and the sluggish surge of the turbid waters of the river as they break upon the shore.

The planters of the south are a peculiar people, and may properly be designated the aristocracy of their section of the country. In the winter season, those residing along the Mississippi and its lower tributaries usually resort to New Orleans on business connected with their plantations, and generally confine themselves to the large hotels or the streets adjacent. They seldom trouble themselves about the details of trade, and go to New Orleans in the business season only to have their accounts settled by their agents, or to join in the festivities of the time and place. The majority of them are tall, well-formed, noble-looking men—dignified in deportment, and manly in appearance. They walk with a slow, deliberate tread, as if never in a hurry, and move along like men entirely independent of the cares of this world. They contrast strongly with the busy, bustling sons of trade from the north, who transact business for and among them; they appear to entertain a supreme contempt for labour, and for those who submit to it for a livelihood—a feeling they imbibe in childhood from the circumstance of the labour of their plantations being performed by slaves—mere human cattle in the estimation of the planter.

To the stranger, one of the most interesting places in the city is the auction-mart in Bank's Arcade, where negroes are disposed of in the same manner that animals are in England. During my residence in the great commercial emporium of Louisiana, I often visited the slave-markets—often saw slaves sold, but I must say I never, in a single instance, witnessed men separated from their wives, mothers from their children, or children from their parents. The sales by auction in Bank's Arcade were either of individual negroes without relatives, or of whole families. I am no advocate of that debasing system of slavery which tarnishes the escutcheon of my native land, but candour obliges me to be truthful when speaking of it. Negroes are sold, however; and the whites who dispose of them so are not too delicate in the operation. One scene which I witnessed in New Orleans will not readily be effaced from my memory, and as it will illustrate my subject, I will endeavour to describe it. The auction-mart is a large room, about 150 feet long by 35 feet wide, well lighted, and provided with seats for the slaves, desks for the transaction of business, and an auctioneer's stand. The negroes are placed upon an elevated platform immediately in front of the crier, and the crowd assembles around the animal on sale, those most desirous of purchasing being nearest the stand. The auctioneer commenced by reading a printed description of the negro first put up; and after

assuring the people assembled that the boy—for all male slaves are so called, no matter what their age—was free from the crimes and disabilities proscribed by law—that is, not given to thieving or idleness—he solicited a bid; nor was he long without receiving one. Some of the bidders asked the negro a few questions as to his habits: whether he ever ran away? whether he had a wife or children? and what he was able to do? To the first two queries, the boy answered that he had; and on being pressed as to his running, stated that he went to see his wife, who was on an adjoining plantation. The auctioneer laughed the fault off; and on the negro stating that his wife was dead, the bidders caused him to strip his coat off, and began to examine his person. One felt the muscles of his arm; another opened his mouth, and inspected his teeth, as you would those of a horse; and then his joints and bones were examined, to see whether he was in all respects sound. The poor wretch bore with patience the scrutiny he was subjected to, and cast many an anxious glance about him as the bidding went on. He instinctively turned to each new bidder, as if to fathom, if possible, the character of his probable master; and if the prospective purchaser did not possess a face expressive of kindness, the countenance of the negro fell. Jests were bandied about at the expense of the poor creature; and after a determined effort on the part of the salesman to make the most of his man, the boy was sold to the highest bidder, and removed from the platform.

Others were placed upon the stand for disposal, among whom was a young yellow woman of the age of twenty-two or three years. She was rather pretty, neat and tidy in appearance, and modest in deportment. The auctioneer proclaimed her merits aloud, and after enumerating her qualifications as a house-servant, closed his laudation of her by saying that she was a good Christian!—a character he considered valuable. The poor young woman felt her degraded situation, and the blood mounted to her temples as she sat and bore the scrutiny of the purchasers. There was but little delicacy of feeling exhibited towards her by the mob of bidders, and she was obliged to submit to the same indignities as the man, but seemed to feel them more keenly. Coarse, brutal jests were uttered, to all of which she listened in silence, but her eyes filling with tears. I turned from the soul-sickening spectacle, and was glad to hear the auctioneer say, as I was leaving the place, that the price offered for her was not sufficient, and that she would not then be sold. There are other slave-markets in the city, and other objects of interest, which I must defer till a future opportunity.

TRIALS OF THE LONDON JAILERS FOR MURDER.

The admirers of Hogarth's works will be well acquainted with one plate of a very remarkable nature. It is in some of the popular editions called 'Bambridge on Trial for Murder;' but strictly, it only represents his examination, before a committee of the House of Commons, in one of the dungeons of the Fleet Prison, of which he was warden. The usual artistic aids of grouping and shading are wanting in this work as in many others by the same master. In rejecting these aids to effect, he was a true pre-Raphaelite; but he did not abandon them recklessly or capriciously: he had a great object in view. He was the moralist or the narrator with his brush and burin, and could look at nothing but his primary objects. He saw in his mind's eye the people doing the actions of which he wished to convey an impression; and when he had set them down, if the grouping was not harmonious, he could not help it—an alteration would spoil the moral or distort the

narrative. The shadows might be without breadth or mass—cold, meagre, or in any other way defective—he would not touch them for the finest effect of chiaroscuro if it would enfeeble the expression of a countenance, or hide some detail calculated to impress the spectator. It was the reality of his groups, not their harmony or picturesqueness, that were all in all to him. He drew and coloured correctly, but he paid no further homage to the principles of pure art. And it involves no disrespect for high art to say, that the world would have been a loser if Hogarth had sacrificed for its attainment the objects towards which his peculiar genius instinctively carried him.

The examination of Bambridge is the most faulty of all his productions in an artistic sense; but its reality at once overpowers the attention. We see all the details of the dungeon: the heavy stanchioned windows, the thick oaken door barred and chained. The group within is perhaps too well seen for the natural amount of light; but it was the artist's object to depict it distinctly, and every member is fully visible. It seems strangely inconsistent with the place. Twelve gentlemen, in the courtly full dress of George II.'s day, are grouped round a temporary table. Their features exhibit intense curiosity mingled with anxiety. The chairman has been examining a large iron instrument, made evidently for covering the head, and holding the arms stretched out in a constrained attitude; and with a face strongly expressive of high-minded indignation and deep compassion, he turns to the figure of Bambridge behind. That figure is one of Hogarth's master-pieces; and it has been remarked, that impotent rage, terror, and detected guilt were never before so powerfully portrayed by art: the carriage, to be sure, is constrained and ungraceful enough; but one is at first too much absorbed in its moral effect to notice these blemishes. There is another conspicuous figure present: a victim with a few rags on him, his face and limbs emaciated, and an instrument of torture, not unlike that which the chairman is handling, fixed to his arms and neck.

This abject-looking wretch is supposed to be Sir William Rich, Baronet, whom the committee of inspection found so heavily ironed, that for a month before he had not been able to remove his clothes. This gentleman had had a bitter quarrel with Bambridge on a point on which the warden was very sensitive—prison-fees. In fact, the rapacity of the keepers was the great source of their cruelty. Their appointments could be made enormously lucrative by the exaction of extra fees. Bambridge had bought his wardenship, had sunk a small fortune in the purchase, and was of course desirous to make the most of his bargain. Sir William maintained, that he had been banded from prison to prison for the sake of entrance-fees, which, from his being a baronet, were higher than those exacted from the untitled. Sir William struggled against the legality of the exactions; in fact, he seems to have been unable to pay them. A long tissue of violences then occurred, and, one of the altercations taking place where a shoemaker was at work, Sir William, driven to desperation by insults, threats, and imminent danger from the armed turnkeys who were present, struck Bambridge with the shoemaker's knife, and slightly wounded him. The committee who visited the prison, in their report, then say: 'Immediately after this, Sir William was loaded with heavy irons, and put into the dungeon on the common side for two or three days, and was then removed to the dungeon on the master's side; in which deplorable situation, in the last hard winter, he remained ten days, and could have no fire but charcoal, which (there being no fireplace) the closeness of the dungeon, and the fear of being suffocated, rendered more dangerous and intolerable than the severity of the weather.'

'Sir William applying to the Court of Common Pleas for redress, a rule was made for his removal, and lighter

irons. Sir William was accordingly removed, but the heavy irons were kept on him; and in that condition he suffered until the committee visited the prison.'

There were several criminal prosecutions raised against the keepers of the prisons compromised by the reports of Colonel Oglethorpe's committee. The treatment of Sir William Rich, however, was not one of the grounds, for he appears to have survived the injuries he received; and the public mind was raised to such furious indignation, that it would endure nothing less than trials for murder. We have endeavoured to shew, in a previous article, how much humanity owes to the exposures of this committee, and to such proceedings by the House of Commons generally, whenever it got the clue to any great outrage or cruelty. There is another institution, however, of which the proceedings on this occasion brought out the high protective functions—trial by jury. This popular institution, in fact, protected the accused persons from the fury of the mob, who demanded their blood. There could be no doubt that the reports of the committee were an exposure of a dreadful system, or rather of a chaotic absence of all system. It was natural that the public should immediately desire to satiate their indignant vengeance on the individuals who seemed to be mainly instrumental in producing such horrors. But those of the public who exercised the important function of jurymen, had to divest their minds of the misleading influence of the general history of events, and set themselves coolly to the task of deciding whether the individuals before them had designedly and knowingly taken away lives. That in many respects they were guilty wretches, was not to be doubted. But had they actually committed murder? or were they not rather the mere partakers in a vile system of mismanagement, which, though its general results were often fatal to life, incalculable all who had to do with it, from the legislature, which passed imperfect and inconsiderate measures, down to the turnkeys, who rivetted the chains and drew the bolts?

Bambridge was brought to trial on the 22d of May 1729 for the murder of Robert Castell. But the very nature of the accusation shewed how difficult it was, as well as how unjust, to throw the whole responsibility of a bad system on one man. Castell had been kept, not in the jail, but in a spunging-house attached to it, in which Bambridge was concerned, and where he could pillage the prisoners more amply than even in the prison with all its abuses. It was of course only those who could 'bleed,' or pay well, who were so disposed of. From time immemorial, these establishments have been a source of legitimate pillage, because the debtor sometimes prefers being privately in custody in such a place, to the disgrace attached to an actual commitment to a public jail. Bambridge's spunging-house appears to have been exactly what the London novelists describe such a place to have been a century later—a den full of filth and dissipation, where the viciously extravagant and the unfortunate, are systematically fleeced with impartial severity. In general, the commitment to the spunging-house is the prisoner's choice. It was not so, however, in Castell's instance. He prayed to be committed to the prison. There was a man named Wright in the house, ill of small-pox in an aggravated form, and Castell predicted that, if confined there, he would catch the disease and die. The fatal result thus anticipated occurred; and for having deliberately brought it on, Bambridge was tried for murder. His conduct was rapacious, reckless, and tyrannical, but it was just that of other people in his position. Their power and irresponsibility encouraged them in such acts; and it seemed scarcely just to make him solely responsible for such a result of the whole evil system as this man's death by small-pox. Bambridge was therefore acquitted. But a strong vindictive feeling was exhibited against him, which almost created a reaction in his favour. In the

practice of the law of England, there was an old form called an Appeal of Murder, by which, independently of any public trial, a widow might conduct proceedings against the murderer of her husband. Blackstone mentions it as a process so complicated and peculiar, that it had practically fallen out of use. Castelli's widow, however, was urged to prosecute Bambridge by appeal. The proceedings, chiefly consisting of technicalities, fill a considerable volume. In the end, however, Bambridge was acquitted.

An onslaught had been in the meantime made against another of the offensive keepers—William Acton, head-turnkey of the Marshalsea. He was brought to trial on the 30th July 1729 for murder, on the ground of the following statement of the committee of visitation:—

'In the year 1726, Thomas Bliss, a carpenter, not having any friends to support him, was almost starved to death in the prison; upon which he endeavoured to get out of the prison by a rope lent him by another prisoner. In the attempt, he was taken by the keepers, dragged by the heels into the lodge, barbarously beaten, and put into irons, in which he was kept several weeks. One afternoon, as he was quietly standing in the yard with his irons on, some of the said Acton's men called him into the lodge, where Acton was then drinking and merry with company. In about half an hour, Bliss came out crying, and gave an account that, when he was in the lodge, they, for their diversion, as they called it, fixed on his head an iron instrument (which appears to be an iron skull-cap), which was screwed so close, that it forced the blood out of his ears and nose. And he further declared, that his thumbs were at the same time put into a pair of thumb-screws, which were screwed so tight, that the blood started out of them; and from that time he continued disordered to the day of his death.'

Several witnesses proved that such a shocking scene, or something like it, had occurred; but in the testimony of a number of people, with peculiar motives actuating their evidence, there was much confusion. It was not clear that the man's death was owing to the wanton torture—it might have been occasioned by a fall in attempting to escape. There was much confused testimony as to the share which Acton had in the actual infliction; and some witnesses wished to make out that he had been particularly humane personally to the poor prisoner. On these doubts he was acquitted, making a very narrow escape.

There was a strong desire, however, to make a victim of Acton; and, on the 2d August, he was again put on trial for his life for the murder of George Bromfield. The substance of the charge was, that 'Acton beat him inhumanly and unmercifully, so that the marks and strokes of the blows were visible after his death. Not satisfied with this, he put him in double irons, which the man could not well bear, and put him into a hole which is damp, dirty, and narrow, so that he could not stand upright or lie at length; he was kept there for several days. The prisoner then began to relent, and took him into another place, but did not take the irons off at that time. But the man having contracted an ill state of health, when the prisoner thought it would be the occasion of his death, he then took off the irons; but that was too late, for he soon died.' Here, again, there was little doubt of the cruelty having been committed, but it was not clear that it had been the immediate cause of death; and in the secrecy and irresponsibility of the prison arrangements, it could not be proved that Acton was the inflicter, so he was again acquitted. His enemies had, however, prepared a whole battery of charges against him. He was immediately put on trial for the murder of John Newton. This man had been put into a dungeon so loathsome, from the nature of the various kinds of filth finding an entrance to it, that the description of it in the testimony is sickening.

Still, in following up a vile, reckless system, it could not be shewn that the head-turnkey had committed deliberate murder, and he was acquitted. Again, he was tried for the murder of James Thomson, and again acquitted. The case was, in fact, not nearly so strong as the others.

As the result of the trials and inquiries to which we have referred, there were, of course, many secondary punishments in dismissal from offices; and it would appear that the offending parties had to bestow considerable sums in hush-money; for when public feeling took a run against them, there seemed no end to the multitude of accusers. Their trials must also have been costly, and their position while these depended, extremely nervous. The public, however, demanded victims for the gibbet, and were disappointed with the general results. It is not to be regretted, however, that they were not gratified. Had Bambridge and Acton been hanged, the public would have believed that the system of extortion and cruelty was effectually suppressed by examples so terrible, and would in all probability have been grievously mistaken. While they remained uncontrolled, reckless men would yield to the impulses of their bad passions, even at the risk of life. It is a phenomenon exemplified every day. Hanging does not always put down the practices people are hanged for. Since the exposure had been in this instance so effective, it was all the better that the public should not have had reason to suppose they had got an effectual protection in putting to death those whom accident rather than excess of guilt had selected. Attention was drawn from the men to the system; and it was seen, that there was more safety in preventing such frightful abuses, than in allowing men to perpetrate them unchecked, with the chance of subsequent punishment.

A CORNISH CHURCH-YARD BY THE SEVERN SEA.

PERHAPS there is no county in all Great Britain less known to the bulk even of the more intelligent portion of the community than Cornwall. Its geographical position has hitherto isolated it, and it will probably be very long ere railways introduce any material alteration either in the character of the people or in the aspect of the land. The knowledge of Cornwall popularly diffused in England usually amounts to this—that it is a desolate peninsula, barren and treeless; that it contains inexhaustible mines, extending far under the sea; that its miners and peasantry speak a *patois* quite unintelligible to the people of any other part of England; that it boasts a St Michael's Mount and a Land's End; and that its natives have, from time immemorial, enjoyed the unenviable notoriety of being merciless *wreckers*, devoid of the milk of human kindness. How unmerited this last stigma is, as applied to modern Cornishmen, the anecdotes we have to relate will sufficiently indicate.

The church of the remote village of Morwenstow, in Cornwall, is close on the Severn Sea, and the vicar's glebe is bounded by stern rifted cliffs, 450 feet high. Orkney or Shetland itself perhaps does not contain a more wild and romantic place than Morwenstow. 'Nothing here but doth suffer a sea-change.' Fragments of wreck everywhere attest the nature of the coast. If an unfortunate vessel is driven by a north-west or a south-west gale within the Horns of Hartland and Padstow Points, God help her hapless crew! for she is doomed to certain destruction. Along the whole coast there is no harbour of refuge—nothing but iron rocks. Here the roar of the ocean is incessant, and in stormy weather appalling. Mighty waves then fling themselves against the giant cliffs, and bursting with thundering crash, send their spray in salt-showers over the land. The life led by the

dwellers near these solitary cliffs can be but dimly imagined by the inhabitants of inland cities. During the long dark nights of winter, they listen between the fierce bursts of the tempest, expecting every moment to hear the cry of human agony, from the crew of some foundering bark, rise above the wild laugh of the waves; and when morning breaks, they descend to the rugged beach, not knowing whether they may not find it strewn with wrecks and corpses. So tremendous is the power of the sea on this particular part of the coast, that insulated masses of rock, from ten to twenty tons in weight, are frequently uplifted and hurled about the beach. Whatever stigma once attached to the people of the coast as wreckers who allured vessels to destruction, or plundered and murdered the helpless crews cast ashore, a character the very reverse may most justly be claimed by the existing generation. Their conduct in all cases of shipwreck is admirable, and nobly do they second the exertions of their amiable and gifted vicar, the Rev. R. S. Hawker, whose performance of his arduous duties is appreciated far beyond the boundaries of old Cornwall.

Many a startling legend of shipwreck can the worthy vicar tell you; and he will shew you at his vicarage, five figure-heads of ships, and numerous other melancholy relics of his 'flotsam and jetsam' searches along the coast of his parish. In his escritoire are no less than fifty or sixty letters of thanks, addressed to him by the relatives of mariners whose mortal remains he has rescued from the sea, and laid side by side, to rest in the hallowed earth of his church-yard. Let us visit this church-yard with him, and we shall see objects not seen every day 'among the tombs;' and hear stories which, melancholy as they are, give us reason proudly to own the men of Cornwall as our fellow-countrymen.

Not to speak of the numerous scattered single graves of drowned sailors, three entire crews of ships here rest together. Nearly all their corpses were found by the vicar in person, who, with his people, searched for them among the rocks and tangled seaweed, when the storms had spent their fury; and here they received at his benevolent hands solemn and befitting Christian sepulture. As a local paper well remarked at the time: 'Strangers as they were, receiving their last resting-place from the charity of the inhabitants upon whose coast they were thrown, they have not been piled one upon another, in a common pit, but are buried side by side, each in his own grave. This may seem a trifle; but reverence for the remains of the departed is a Christian virtue, and is associated with the most sublime and consolatory doctrine of our holy religion. They who thus honour the dead, will seldom fail in their duty to the living.' We cordially echo this sentiment.

At the foot of one group of graves stands the figure-head of the *Caledonia*, with dirk and shield. The gallant crew sleep well beneath its shade! The *Caledonia* was a Scotch brig, belonging to Arbroath, and was wrecked about ten years ago. Fast by repose the entire crew of the *Alonso*, and near the mounds which mark their resting-place is a boat, keel uppermost, and a pair of oars crosswise. Full of melancholy suggestiveness are these objects, and the history the vicar tells us fully realises what we should anticipate from seeing them in a church-yard. The *Alonso* was a large schooner belonging to Stockton-on-Tees, and came down this coast on her voyage from Wales to Hamburg with a cargo of iron. Off Morwenstow, she encountered a fearful storm, and despite every effort of seamanship, drove within the fatal 'Points.'

'Pilot! they say when tempests rave,
Dark Cornwall's sons will haunt the main,
Watch the wild wreck, but not to save!'

Her race is run—deep in the sand
She yields her to the conquering wave;
And Cornwall's sons—they line the strand—
Rush they to plunder?—No, to save! *

But, alas! no effort of 'dark Cornwall's sons' could now avail. The captain of the *Alonso*, a stern, powerful man, is supposed to have been overmastered by his crew in the awful excitement when impending destruction became a dread certainty. At anyrate, he and they took to their boat, and forsook the wreck. What a moment was this for the spectators! For a few fleeting minutes, all was breathless suspense—the boat now riding on the crests of the mad billows, now sinking far down in their mountainous hollows. One moment, it is seen bravely bearing its living freight—the next, drifting shoreward, swamped! Hark! a terrible cry of despair echoes over the raging billows: it is the blended death-cry of the perishing mariners. Captain and crew, nine in number, all were lost, and all are now sleeping side by side in their last long home, with their boat rotting over their heads. One of the owners of the vessel posted to Morwenstow to identify the bodies of the crew. This was done chiefly by comparing the initials on their clothes and on their skins with the ship's articles which were cast ashore. One of the crew was a young Dane, a remarkably noble-looking fellow, six feet two in height. On his broad chest was tattooed the Holy Rood—a cross with our Saviour on it, and his mother and St John standing by. On his stalwart arm was an anchor and the initials of his name, 'P. B.'—which on the ship's list was entered Peter Benson. Three years after his burial, the vicar received, through a Danish consul, a letter of inquiry from the parents of this ill-fated mariner in Denmark. They had traced him to the *Alonso*, had heard of her wreck, and were anxious to know what had become of his remains. His name was Bengstein, and he was engaged to be married to his Danish *Pige*, or sweet-heart, on his return home. Poor *Pige of Denmark*! Never more will thy lover return to claim thee as his bride. Thy gallant sailor rests from all his wanderings in a solitary church-yard in a foreign land. In heaven thou mayest meet him again—on earth, never!

Another anecdote related by the vicar deeply affected us. The brig *Hero*, from Liverpool to London, drove in sight of Morwenstow Cliffs in a terrible storm, and drifted towards Bude, a small dry haven to the southward. Her crew unhappily took to their boat, were immediately capsized of course, and every soul perished. The ship itself drove ashore at Bude, with the fire still burning in her cabin. They found in one of her berths a Bible—a Sunday-school reward. A leaf was folded down, and a passage marked with ink *not long dry*. It was the 33d chapter of Isaiah, and the 21st, 22d, and 23d verses. There was a piece of writing-paper between the leaves, whereon the owner of the Bible had begun to copy the passage!

And who was he who possessed sufficient nerve and presence of mind to quote this striking passage of *Isly Writ* when on the very brink of eternity—conscious, as he must have been, that there was hardly a shadow of hope that he would escape the fate which actually befell him almost immediately afterwards? He was a poor sailor-lad of seventeen, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A letter from her was also found in his berth. His body was cast ashore near Morwenstow.

The wreck of the *Hero* occurred about a year prior to that of the *Caledonia* of Arbroath before mentioned. One man was saved from the latter vessel, and was the only mourner who attended the funeral-sermon preached by the vicar of Morwenstow after the inter-

* *Echoes from Old Cornwall*; a beautiful little work, by the vicar of Morwenstow.

ment of his messmates. On this occasion, the vicar took for his text the verses quoted by the sailor-boy, and every hearer wept.

We might go on with the reminiscences suggested by many a sailor's grave, but we have said enough to indicate what romantic and pathetic histories of real life are interwoven with this wild and solitary Cornish church-yard. Many a gallant mariner who has battled with the breeze of every clime, here calmly sleeps his last long watch; and with him are buried who shall say what hopes and loves of mourning friends and kindred?

THE VINEGAR-PLANT.

A FEW years ago, the attention of domestic circles began to be aroused by the reported introduction 'from India' of a wonderful plant, possessed of the property of converting treacle and other saccharine fluids into excellent table-vinegar. This rumour created an inquiry after the plant by thrifty housewives; and the excitement subsequently produced by the frequent suggestion of the subject at dinner-parties, led to the speedy diffusion of the vinegar-plant as a useful, we might almost add, indispensable article in private families. Nor was this retarded by the reports promulgated by some mischievous botanists, that the use of vinegar so produced would insure the development of vinegar-plants in the stomach!

The vinegar-plant does not exhibit any of those peculiarities which our ordinary ideas associate with a plant. It may be described as a tough, gelatinous substance, of a pale-brownish colour; and to nothing can it be more appropriately compared than to a piece of boiled tripe. It is usually placed in a small jar containing a solution of sugar, or a mixture of sugar, treacle (or golden sirup), and water; and after being allowed to remain for six or eight weeks in a kitchen cupboard, or other warm situation, the solution is found to be converted into vinegar, this change being due to a kind of fermentation caused by the plant. While this change is going on, the further development of the plant proceeds: it divides into two distinct layers, which in course of time would again increase in size and divide, and so on, each layer being suitable for removing to a separate jar for the production of vinegar. The layers may also be cut into separate pieces for the purpose of propagating more freely. The solution necessarily causes the vinegar to be of a sirupy nature, but not to such an extent as to communicate a flavour to it; when evaporated to dryness, a large quantity of saccharine matter is left.

When this remarkable production was brought before the notice of scientific men, it was difficult to form an opinion respecting it. The microscope shewed it to have an organised structure; but its peculiar character, and its remarkable mode of life, differed entirely from any other known production. It has been instrumental, however, in opening up a new field of inquiry, and recent investigations shew that it is not a solitary form of organic life.

The vinegar-plant has been assigned a place in the large and obscure order of fungi. It is, in fact, a familiar species of mould, but in a peculiar stage of development. Dr Lindley and most other botanists regard it as the *Penicillium glaucum* (Greville). To give a correct notion of the true character of this abnormal production, it is necessary to allude briefly to the mode of development in fungi.

The fungi or mushroom family form an order of the class Cryptogamia (flowerless plants), and in their structure are entirely cellular—that is, their whole substance is composed of simple cells varying in form and arrangement in the different species. In the fungus there are two distinct systems—the vegetative and reproductive. The vegetative system consists

of variously modified filaments, generally concealed in the earth or other matrix on which the fungus grows, and is the *mycelium* or spawn. This spawn is well known in horticulture, being used for the production of mushrooms. The reproductive organs consist of spores, or spherical cells, very minute, but performing the part of seeds in the higher plants: these spores are sometimes supported on simple filamentous processes; but in the common mushroom we find the gills on its under-side to be the part whereon they are produced, the whole of the mushroom which we use belonging in fact to the reproductive system. Now, in its perfect state, the vinegar-plant presents all the usual appearance of common mould. But in the state in which we have it in an acetous solution, only the vegetative system, or the spawn, is developed, and developed to an extraordinary extent—consisting, when viewed under the microscope, of filamentous threads capable of producing the fructification or perfect mould whenever they are subjected to the proper conditions. These cellular filaments by being so closely interlaced together, give the peculiar leathery appearance exhibited by the vinegar-plant. Whenever the vinegar is allowed to evaporate, and the mycelium to become free from saturation, then the usual form of the mould is produced.

This is not the only instance of the mycelium of a fungus developing itself naturally in an abnormal condition without producing organs of reproduction. According to Dr Lindley, 'it is probable that the flocculent matter which forms in various infusions when they become "mother," and which bears this name, is only the mycelium of *Mucor*, *Penicillium*, and other fungals of a similar nature.' It is not only in stale vinegar, in wine bottles, in empyreumatic succinate of ammonia, and in saccharine solutions, that such fungoid growths appear. Who is not familiar with the tough mass that is so often brought up on the point of the pen from the inkholder? It, too, is of the same nature, and like all similar productions, is especially rife in hot weather.

It must not be supposed that what is usually called the vinegar-plant is always the mycelium of *Penicillium glaucum*. There may be many distinct species which assume the form when placed under the required conditions, and all of them may have the power of producing vinegar.

Mould of various kinds, when placed in sirup, shews the same tendency as the vinegar-plant to form a flat, gelatinous, or leathery expansion. This is well shewn by Professor Balfour, in a paper recently laid before the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, 'On the Growth of various kinds of Mould in Sirup.' The results of his experiments are as follow:—

I. Some mould that had grown on an apple was put into sirup on 5th March 1851, and in the course of two months afterwards there was a cellular, flat, expanded mass formed, while the sirup was converted into vinegar. Some of the original mould was still seen on the surface, retaining its usual form.

II. Mould obtained from a pear was treated in a similar way at the same time; the results were similar. So also with various moulds obtained from bread, tea, and other vegetable substances, the effect being in most cases to cause fermentation, which resulted in the production of vinegar.

III. On 8th November 1850, a quantity of raw sugar, treacle, and water, was put into a jar, without any mould or other substance being introduced; it was left untouched till 5th March 1851, when, on being examined, it was found that a growth like that of the vinegar-plant had formed, and vinegar was produced, as in the other experiments. The plant was removed into a jar of fresh sirup, and again the production of vinegar took place.

IV. Other experiments shewed, that when the sirup

is formed from purified white sugar alone, the vinegar is not produced so readily, the length of time required for the changes varying from four to six months. There may possibly be something in the raw sugar and treacle which tends to promote the acetous change.

The professor exhibited specimens of the different kinds of mould to the meeting, some in sirup of different kinds, and others in the vinegar which had been formed. Several members of the society expressed their opinions on the subject. Dr Greville remarked, that he had no doubt of the vinegar-plant being an abnormal state of some fungus. It is well known that many fungi, in peculiar circumstances, present most remarkable forms; and Dr Greville instanced the so-called genus *Myconema* of Fries, as well as the genus *Ozonium*. Even some of the common toad-stools, or *Agarics*, present anomalous appearances, such as the absence of the pileus, &c., in certain instances. The remarkable appearances of dry-rot in different circumstances are well known. Although sirup, when left to itself, will assume the acetous form, still there can be no doubt but the presence of the plant promotes and expedites the change. Professor Simpson observed, that the changes in fungi may resemble the alternation of generations so evident in the animal kingdom, as noticed by Steenstrup and others. In the *Meduse* there are remarkable changes of form, and there is also the separation of buds, resembling the splitting of the vinegar-plant. Mr Embleton remarked, that in the neighbourhood of Embleton, in Northumberland, every cottager uses the plant for the purpose of making vinegar.

From the account we have given of the vinegar-plant, it will be seen that the numerous reports as to its introduction from India and other distant climes are probably without foundation. Whatever may be the history of individual specimens, certain it is that the plant in question is a native production. It will also be seen by those acquainted with botanical investigations, that the great difficulty in arriving at correct conclusions respecting the plant, was the absence of properly developed examples. We still want investigations as to the species which undergo this remarkable development. The recent researches of the Rev. Mr Berkeley and others shew that the fungi, above all other plants, are pre-eminent for abnormal variation.

We ought to observe, that the remarkable mode of propagation possessed by the vinegar-plant—in the absence of reproductive organs—by means of dividing into laminae, is quite in accordance with the merismatic division by which many of the lower *algæ* propagate.

STRENGTH OF INSECTS.

Few of us suspect, while we amuse ourselves with watching the active gambols of the tiny beings, that to enable them to perform such feats as we see them execute every day, an amount of strength has been conferred upon them which could not safely have been intrusted to any of the larger animals, and that nothing but the comparatively diminutive size, to which all the insect races are jealously restricted, prevents them becoming the tyrants of this globe, and the destroyers of all other terrestrial creatures. The common flea, as every one knows, will, without much apparent effort, jump 200 times its own length; and several grasshoppers and locusts are said to be able to perform leaps quite as wonderful. In the case of the insect, they scarcely excite our notice; but if a man were coolly to take a standing-leap of 300 odd yards, which would be an equivalent exertion of muscular power, perhaps our admirers of athletic sports might be rather startled at such performance. Again, for a man to run ten miles within the hour, would be admitted to be a tolerably good display of pedestrianism; but what are we to say to the little fly observed by Mr Delisle, 'so minute as almost to be invisible,' which ran nearly six inches in a second, and

in that space was calculated to have made 1080 steps? This, according to the calculations of Kirby and Spence, is as if a man, whose steps measured two feet, should run at the incredible rate of twenty miles a minute! Equally surprising are the instances of insect strength given by Mr Newport. The great stag-beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), which tears off the bark from the roots and the branches of the trees, has been known to gnaw a hole, an inch in diameter, through the side of an iron canister in which it was confined, and on which the marks of its jaws were distinctly visible, as proved by Mr Stephens, who exhibited the canister at one of the meetings of the Entomological Society. The common beetle (*Geotrupes stercorarius*) can, without injury, support and even raise very great weights, and make its way beneath almost any amount of pressure. In order to put the strength of the insect Atlas to the test, experiments have been made which prove that it is able to sustain and escape from beneath a load of from 29 to 30 ounces—a prodigious burden, when it is remembered that the insect itself does not weigh as many grains: in fact, once more taking man as a standard of comparison, it is as though a person of ordinary size should raise and get from under a weight of between 40 and 50 tons.—*Ryder Jones's Natural History of Animals.*

A LONDON EDITOR FIFTY YEARS AGO.

Our editor was originally intended for the kirk, and was a well-informed person; but to see him at or after midnight in his official chair, a writing his 'lender,' was a treat for a philosopher. With the slips of paper before him, a pot of porter close at hand, and a pipe of tobacco in his mouth, or casually laid down, he proceeded *secundum artem*. The head hung with the chin on his collar-bone, as in deep thought—a whiff—another—a tug at the beer—and a line and a half or two lines committed to the blotted paper.—*Jerdan's Autobiography.*

THE LOVER'S GRAVE.

'Man celebrates a more beautiful festival for the dead when he dries the tears of others, than when he sheds his own; and the most beautiful flower and cypress-garland which we can hang upon loved monuments, is a fruit-garland of good deeds.'—*RICHTER.*

MAIDEN, rise, and weep no more—thy betrothed hath found a rest

Far more blissful than the pillow of thy fond and faithful breast.

He hath passed away ere time dimmed the lustre of those eyes,

Whose dark depths revealed to thee more than passion's words or sighs;

Ere his voice of music merged in a harsh or careless tone—

Ere he ceased to deem that life without thee was drear and lone.

How couldst thou have borne a change, often wrought as years progress,

When illusions, cherished early, vanish never more to bless?

Happy dreams!—soon scared away when the flood of human tears

Scattereth the tender bloom which with the storm-burst disappears!

Maiden, rise, and weep no more—unscathed memories are thine:

Bow thine head in resignation meekly to the Power Divine.

C. A. M. W.

Printed and Published by W. and R. CHAMBERS, High Street, Edinburgh. Also sold by W. S. ORR, Amen Corner, London; D. N. CHAMBERS, 55 West Nile Street, Glasgow; and J. M'GLASHAN, 50 Upper Sackville Street, Dublin.—Advertisements for Monthly Parts are requested to be sent to MAXWELL & CO., 31 Nicholas Lane, Lombard Street, London, to whom all applications respecting their insertion must be made.